

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 COA-01

DLOS-03 PM-03 NSC-10 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4909

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY BONN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 12112

LIMDIS

OTTAWA FOR AMBASSADOR MCKERNAN

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: EFIS, UK, IC

SUBJECT: SETTLEMENT OF UK-ICELAND COD WAR

REF: (A) STATE 206019 NOTAL; (B) LONDON 12024

1. AT OUR REQUEST, JOHN FAWCETT, FCO DESK OFFICER FOR ICELAND, HAS GIVEN US FOLLOWING RUNDOWN OF UK-ICELANDIC FISHING AGREEMENT WORKED OUT DURING PRIME MINISTER JOHANNESSON'S VISIT TO LONDON, OCTOBER 15-16:

2. THE AGREEMENT IS TO RUN FOR TWO YEARS. ICELANDERS PROPOSED A TARGET CATCH FIGURE OF 130,000 TONS PER YEAR, A MODEST CONCESSION ON THEIR PART THAT PLEASED THE BRITISH AND MADE THE REST OF THE NEGOTIATIONS MUCH EASIER.

3. AFTER SOME HAGGLING OVER SHIP SIZES AND TYPES, BOTH
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SIDES COMPROMISED ON THE EXCLUSION FROM ICELANDIC WATERS OF THIRTY BRITISH TRAWLERS -- FIFTEEN OF THE

LARGEST AND FIFTEEN OTHERS. ACCORDING TO BRITISH CALCULATIONS, THIS WILL AMOUNT TO A 27 PERCENT CUT IN THE TOTAL NUMBER OF VESSELS AND A 36 PERCENT CUT IN THE TOTAL GROSS REGISTERED TONNAGE.

4. ALL FACTORY VESSELS AND FREEZERS WILL BE EXCLUDED. THIS, FAWCETT CONCEDED, WAS REALLY A COSMETIC CLAUSE SINCE BRITISH (UNLIKE GERMAN) FACTORY VESSELS AND FREEZERS DO NOT NORMALLY ENTER ICELANDIC WATERS.

5. THE HARDEST BARGAINING CENTERED ON THE AREA RESTRICTIONS. BRITISH AGREED TO THE CONSERVATION AREAS PROPOSED BY ICELANDERS, AND ICELANDERS AGREED RELUCTANTLY TO GIVE BRITISH ACCESS TO SMALL BOAT FISHING AREAS. WITH RESPECT TO RADIAL AREAS, OF WHICH THERE ARE SIX, ICELANDERS WANTED BRITISH TO FOREGO FISHING IN TWO OF THEM AT ANY GIVEN TIME, BUT BRITISH WOULD AGREE TO CLOSURE OF NO MORE THAN ONE IN SIX. THIS POINT CLEARLY CAUSED JOHANNESSON THE MOST TROUBLE.

6. WITH THIS IN MIND, A BRITISH TEAM OF "TECHNICAL EXPERTS" LEFT FOR ICELAND YESTERDAY, OSTENSIBLY TO INVESTIGATE WHETHER THESE PROPOSED AREAS OF CLOSURE ARE TRULY COMPATIBLE WITH THE AGREED TARGET LIMITS. ON THE BASIS OF THEIR RECALCULATIONS, FAWCETT INDICATED THAT BRITISH MIGHT AGREE TO THE RE-DRAWING OF THE FISHING ZONES AROUND ICELAND INTO FIVE RADIAL AREAS INSTEAD OF SIX AND THE CLOSURE OF ONE OF THESE -- IN OTHER WORDS, A COMPROMISE BETWEEN CLOSING ONE OF SIX AND CLOSING TWO OF SIX. (COMMENT: FAWCETT DID NOT SAY

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SO, BUT BRITISH APPARENTLY RECKON THAT SUCH A LAST-MINUTE CONCESSION MIGHT MAKE IT EASIER FOR JOHANNESSON TO SELL PACKAGE TO ICELANDIC CABINET.) IN ANY EVENT, BRITISH WILL DECIDE WHICH OF THE RADIAL AREAS ARE TO BE CLOSED WHEN.

7. BRITISH AND ICELANDERS HAVE DRAWN UP AN APPROVED LIST OF BRITISH TRAWLERS AND IF ANY OF THESE TRAWLERS VIOLATE THE TERMS OF THE NEW AGREEMENT, THEIR NAMES WILL BE DELETED FROM THE LIST.

8. FAWCETT EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT THAT JOHANNESSON'S PUBLIC STATEMENTS PRIOR TO LEAVING LONDON WERE SO PESSIMISTIC. HIS REMARKS, FAWCETT THOUGHT, WOULD ONLY INCREASE DIFFICULTY OF SECURING APPROVAL OF ICELANDIC CABINET. FAWCETT REITERATED EARLIER OBSERVATION BY WIGGIN (REF B) THAT THE AGREEMENT WAS A COMPLETE PACKAGE TO BE ACCEPTED OR REJECTED EN TOTO, NOT THE STARTING BASE FOR NEW NEGOTIATIONS.

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9. N.B. DETAILS OF AGREEMENT ARE STILL BEING CLOSELY HELD. ADDRESSEES ARE URGED TO TREAT THEM WITH UTMOST DISCRETION SINCE PREMATURE DISCLOSURE MIGHT PREJUDICE ICELANDIC CABINET DELIBERATIONS.

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